

Precilia Nguyen

Based on your viewing of the entire youtube version of Fires in the Mirror which was created from the play for presentation on television, answer the following questions:

1. Describe the *stasis* in the play: where, when, who, what, etc. in a paragraph.

This play is set in Crown Heights, NY during 1991. A small black child is accidentally ran over by a Jewish rabbi, and due to the anti-Semitic views already in place, a Jewish student was stabbed in retaliation to avenge the small child.

2. What is the *intrusion*?

The intrusion might be the stabbing of a Jewish student as revenge for Gavin.

3. What is the *unique factor*?

I think the unique factor would be that it was a Jew who had ran over a black child, because it rose the tension between the two communities to a new high.

4. What is the *dramatic question* that should be answered by the end of the play?

Will both communities ever find peace and forgive each other? Will the black community find the revenge murder to be a sufficient form of justice, if it is even a form of justice at all?

5. In your opinion what is the most theatrical segment of the video version of the play and explain why do you think it is so powerful?

I personally think the moment when the audience can hear and see the many different versions of the incident be played out is a powerful theatrical scene, because it shows the power of bias. As a Psychology student, we are always warned to avoid anything of bias, and words can be a very powerful persuasion. Panic can drastically change how someone sees things and skew what actually occurred. So seeing these different accounts was amazing, because the audience has the exposition of knowing what truly went on.

6. List some of the *themes* of the play.

Racism (and Systemic Racism), Poverty, Inequality, Discrimination, Injustice

7. Television allows the actress to create mini sets, a variety of lighting effects, and detailed costume pieces for the presentation of her many characters, not to mention graphic footage of the actual events in Crown Heights. This is frankly not possible to accomplish on the stage which requires that the action move rapidly between one scene and the other leaving little if any time for a change of dress, settings, lights, and props. Describe some of the varieties of these production details that struck you as particularly effective.

Definitely changing her outfit and voice each time she was a different character helped in keeping track of the play. It solidified each character along with different physical tics and gestures! This definitely cannot be done quickly during a single showing of a play, so TV definitely lend its power of time on Smith's side. The graphic footage showed during the play also helped drive emotion forward to the audience, because it can be difficult by just seeing one actress.



